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SUBJECT: U/S TAUSCHER'S DECEMBER 1-2 VISIT TO ISRAEL

Classified By: A/DCM Marc Sievers, reasons 1.4 (b),(d)

¶1. (S) Summary: Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Ellen Tauscher visited Israel December 1-2. U/S Tauscher focused her visit on setting the stage for a successful Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference (RevCon) in May 2010. She consulted with GOI interlocutors on potential strategy in addressing Egyptian insistence on pushing for the establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East, as a way to divert attention from Iran to Israel. U/S Tauscher reiterated that the United States will not take any action to compromise Israel's security and would consult closely with Israel -- which GOI officials greatly appreciated. Nevertheless, U/S Tauscher said the United States is interested in exploring possible small steps involving Israel to address some of Egypt's NWFZ concerns regarding the lack of implementation of the 1995 resolution. GOI officials for the most part were critical of these tactics, questioning why Israel should be portrayed as part of the problem. They recommended a more direct approach to President Mubarak -- thereby circumventing the Egyptian MFA -- in which Egypt is reminded that Iran is the regional nuclear threat. Other topics discussed include President Obama's arms control and nonproliferation agenda, the P5 1 process and Iran's nuclear program, the FMCT and CTBT, Jordan's plans for a nuclear reactor, and Israel's qualitative military edge (QME). End summary.

¶2. (SBU) U/S Tauscher met with National Security Advisor Uzi Arad on December 1. Arad was accompanied by NSC Senior Advisor and Nuclear Security Summit Sherpa Gil Reich. In a separate meeting on December 1, U/S Tauscher met with MFA Director General Yossi Gal, Deputy Director General for North America Baruch Bina, and Deputy Director General for Strategic Affairs Alon Bar. U.S. participants for the Arad and Gal meetings included Political Counselor Marc Sievers, T Senior Advisor James Timbie, NSC's Adam Scheinman, and political military officer Jason Grubb. U/S Tauscher met for dinner with Israel Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC) and MFA senior officials on December 1, including IAEC Director General Saul Chorev, Deputy Director General David Danieli, and Director for Policy and Arms Control Merav Zefary-Odiz, as well as MFA DDG Bar and Director for Arms Control Rodica Radian-Gordon. On December 2, U/S Tauscher met for breakfast with MOD Political-Military Chief Amos Gilad; U.S. attendees included Charge D'Affaires Luis Moreno, Timbie, Scheinman, and Grubb.

Arms Control/Nonproliferation Agenda  
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¶3. (S) In various meetings with GOI interlocutors, U/S Tauscher outlined an ambitious arms control and nonproliferation agenda, beginning with the President's

Prague speech, and including other priorities such as a follow-on to START, CTBT ratification, the upcoming NPT Review Conference, and negotiating the FMCT. She noted that negotiations with Moscow on START were slow to develop in part due to delayed confirmations and Russian wariness. But U/S Tauscher expected a START follow-on -- including a strong verification regime -- soon.

14. (S) National Security Advisor Arad described President Obama's arms control and nonproliferation agenda as "daunting and challenging." He reaffirmed that the GOI will participate in the April 2010 Nuclear Security summit in Washington, noting that PM Netanyahu planned to attend the summit as discussed between President Obama and PM Netanyahu during their recent one-on-one meeting in Washington. GOI Nuclear Summit Sherpa Gil Reich noted, however, that the Holocaust memorial day in Israel might be a potential scheduling conflict with the summit. Arad expressed appreciation for the summit, noting that if the initiative had been pursued ten years previously, perhaps proliferation cases such as AQ Khan might have been prevented or at least controlled. He wished the United States success negotiating with the Russians on START.

15. (S) Due to the U.S. administration's prioritization of arms control and nonproliferation, Arad also noted that the GOI had recently reconvened a high level committee on these issues comprised of GOI officials and experts from outside the government. He noted that the committee had been formed during President George Herbert Walker Bush's administration to analyze treaties such as the CWC and CTBT, but stopped meeting in 2007. U/S Tauscher expressed interest in meeting with the group during her next visit to Israel; Arad took the request on board.

#### Egypt and the NPT

16. (S) On the NPT, U/S Tauscher reiterated the importance of a successful Review Conference -- including hopefully a consensus resolution. She raised U.S. concerns over potential Egyptian actions at the RevCon, based on previous decades of behavior and "10-15 year-old talking points." U/S Tauscher said the United States is not "naive" with respect to Egypt; nevertheless, the United States must make a sincere, good faith effort to create the conditions for a positive RevCon -- this might include small steps with Israel to address some of Egypt's desire to demonstrate progress in implementation of the 1995 resolution on a region free of weapons of mass destruction.

17. (S) That said, U/S Tauscher reiterated that the United States would consult and coordinate with Israel, and would take no action that might compromise Israel's security. She noted that the United States would like to elevate the NPT RevCon issue to President Mubarak at an appropriate time, and expressed interest in developing an alternate communication track to Mubarak to circumvent the MFA, potentially through Egyptian Intelligence Minister LTG Suleiman. U/S Tauscher said her message to Cairo will be "very tough," and that Egyptian obstructionist behavior linking Israel to Iran's nuclear program is not helping Egypt.

18. (S) Arad said relations with Egypt were "relatively good," describing continued dialogue between PM Netanyahu and President Mubarak, and strong channels of communication at other levels. In many respects, he said Israel's relations with Egypt are almost as good as during PM Rabin's time. Arad said Egypt and Israel do not see "eye-to-eye" on some issues such as Gaza and the Palestinian Authority, but otherwise relations are strong.

19. (S) Arad described the Egyptian MFA, however, as a "nagging problem" in the relationship, particularly regarding the Middle East NWFZ issue, and noted Cairo's refusal to talk to FM Lieberman. Other GOI officials expressed exasperation over Egyptian motivations on the NWFZ; Reich raised Egyptian behavior at the latest IAEA General Conference, as well as

Cairo's negative reaction to the IAEA Board of Governor's recent statement on Iran. Arad said Israel has supported a regional NWFZ as far back as 1992, provided Israel enjoyed peaceful relations with its neighbors. He said the GOI has spoken frankly with Cairo, noting that such behavior is not helpful, and is misdirecting focus away from Iran.

¶10. (S) MOD Political-Military Chief Amos Gilad said Egypt understands that Iran is the real threat to the region, noting that a nuclear weapon-armed Iran is a redline for Cairo. He averred that Egypt does not accept that Iran will become a superpower, but remains afraid of its own domestic political situation post-Mubarak. Gilad expressed succession concerns, noting that Mubarak is "approaching the past more quickly than the future." He added that Mubarak does not have confidence in Egyptian Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit.

¶11. (S) MFA Deputy Director General for Strategic Affairs Alon Bar outlined repeated attempts by the GOI to engage with the Egyptian MFA, but to no avail. He described Egyptian actions linking Israel to Iran's nuclear program in the IAEA as "not encouraging," and questioned how to convince Egypt to drop this "obsession" over the NWFZ. Israel Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC) Director General Saul Chorev and Arms Control Director Merav Zefary-Odiz speculated that Egypt feels challenged by Iranian attempts to acquire nuclear weapons, and includes Israel in any public attack on Tehran in order to give Cairo coverage from regional criticism. Bar argued that the Egyptian MFA raises Israel's nuclear program as a "wedge issue" in order to prevent better relations between Israel and others in the region. IAEC Deputy Director General David Danieli concurred, noting that Egypt can use the nuclear issue to put Israel "in a corner" while benefiting from positive relations between the two countries.

¶12. (S) Zefary-Odiz also reviewed her participation in an International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament conference in September 2009 in Cairo. She described the conference as "very confrontational," and that it was clear Israel was targeted by Egyptian interlocutors. Zefary-Odiz acknowledged that the GOI had anticipated such behavior, and contemplated skipping the conference. She noted that Egyptian officials also lambasted Iranian participants, but were always careful to include Israel and Iran in the same sentence.

¶13. (S) Arad said the GOI will take their cue from U.S. "heavy-lifting": if there is a small step -- "not a concession," he stressed -- that Israel could take to help facilitate, then the GOI would consider it. He noted that the GOI wanted to see a "reversal of trends" from Egypt regarding Iran's nuclear program -- after all, it is in Egypt's interest to do so. He said Israel continues to have reservations regarding the NPT -- following nuclear pursuits by Libya, Syria, and Iran, it is clear to the GOI that the NPT is not sufficient and must be strengthened. The goal of the NPT, he stressed, should not be to "prevent the next Iran, but to stop Iran in order to prevent the next Iran" from occurring.

¶14. (S) Chorev speculated that Egypt will aim to ruin the RevCon. Bar said the Egyptians have not been held accountable for past bad behavior at the NPT RevCon -- "they have never paid the price." He noted that Cairo knows the importance the United States attaches to a successful RevCon, and therefore will try to leverage a "high price" in order not to ruin it. He noted similar tactics with regard to Egypt's counter-smuggling efforts along the border with Gaza.

¶15. (S) Timbie outlined several small steps that might address Egyptian concerns and demonstrate progress in implementation of the 1995 resolution and the Middle East NWFZ: an IAEA forum on the experience of other regional NWFZs; a special coordinator or rappateur on 1995 resolution implementation; a statement from the United States, United Kingdom and Russia reiterating the importance of the 1995

resolution; and exploring text with Israel and Egypt on universality and compliance.

¶16. (S) Gilad questioned these steps from a "tactical/strategic" context, and suggested this was not a tactical matter. He argued against creating the impression that Israel was the problem. Instead, Gilad recommended a strategic, traditional approach -- concessions will only be used by Egypt as leverage. He suggested the United States remind Egypt of its special relationship based on U.S. support, and reaffirm that Iran is the "bad guy." Gilad said Egypt should also be reminded that most countries in the region agree with the NWFZ concept in principle; the Egyptian MFA's insistence on an immediate NWFZ neither fits the current political reality nor makes sense as it diverts focus from Iranian intransigence. He noted that Egypt listens to the United States; it is therefore important to speak clearly and directly when taking the issue to Mubarak.

¶17. (S) Chorev and Zefary-Odiz argued these steps had been tried in the past -- and had failed. Danieli questioned why Israel should take any steps at all. Based on experience at the IAEA and the UN First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, he said "nothing satisfies Egypt" as Cairo "pockets every concession" and demands more -- "it's a slippery slope." Danieli said Israel will not "play by Egypt's rules." Bar concurred, noting that Egypt will "raise the bar," and begin negotiations with these small steps as the baseline -- he was skeptical such steps would prove helpful.

¶18. (S) Arad characterized these steps as "talking endlessly" -- that is "not progress," he said. He was uncomfortable discussing Israel NPT compliance, especially as Israel is not a party to the treaty. He also raised concerns regarding the definition of the Middle East NWFZ -- did it also include Pakistan, India and Iran, for example? Arad said such questions should be posed to Cairo -- if Egypt is willing to include Pakistan in its definition of a Middle East NWFZ, then we can take that as a signal that Cairo is ready for a serious conversation on the matter.

¶19. (S) Zefary-Odiz argued that the NPT as a "global solution" is not appropriate in the current political realities of the Middle East. Due to the region's prior track record of NPT non-compliance, she said a gradual, step-by-step process employing confidence building measures be used to improve relations between neighbors. NPT partner obligations should be enhanced, not reduced, she said. Zefary-Odiz noted that only after peaceful relations are established can arms control measures be pursued, starting with conventional weapons and later focusing on chemical/biological/nuclear arms. She said that Egypt and other Arab states de-link comprehensive peace from arms control measures -- Israel views these elements as inseparable and sequential.

¶20. (S) On a related note, Chorev asked if Israel should attend the RevCon as an observer. U/S Tauscher and Timbie replied that the decision was ultimately the GOI's to make, but offered to raise the issue in Washington. Chorev noted that Israel would be careful not to "make any noise," and could play a positive, consultative role. On the other hand, Danieli acknowledged the argument that as a non-party, perhaps it was not appropriate for Israel to attend.

Iran  
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¶21. (S) U/S Tauscher said the United States was very concerned about the recently announced Iranian plans to build ten additional uranium enrichment facilities. She reiterated the two track strategy of persuasion and pressure, and noted that the time for persuasion is "waning." U/S Tauscher said the United States has "created the coalition" it had hoped for, and was happy to see the recent IAEA BOG's resolution transferred to the UNSC.

¶22. (S) U/S Tauscher noted that the United States was working hard through the P5 1 process to encourage Russian and Chinese cooperation to counter continued Iranian intransigence and inflammatory rhetoric -- Russia and China are "lynch pins," she said. She noted that Russia had worked closely with the United States on the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR) proposal, which Moscow considered an "elegant solution," -- but Iran had not agreed. Keeping Russia engaged, U/S Tauscher explained, also means Chinese cooperation.

¶23. (S) MOD Political-Military Chief Amos Gilad described recent Russian cooperation on Iran as encouraging, but expressed reservations that Russia would join in any sanctions against Iran. He explained that Moscow has raised the provision of sophisticated Israeli unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology in exchange for canceling the S-300 sale to Tehran. Gilad said that Russian interlocutors had acknowledged development gaps in their UAV platform, and is prepared to pay USD one billion for Israeli UAV technology. He reiterated that Israel will not provide its latest UAV technology, arguing that such technology would likely end up in the hands of the Chinese.

¶24. (S) Arad said the GOI appreciated the United States' efforts regarding Iran, noting how hard the United States has worked to build an alliance. He pointed to the recent IAEA Board of Governor's resolution as a successful example of U.S. efforts. Regarding the Qom facility, Arad said the GOI was not surprised by Tehran's "chutzpah." He described a high degree of alertness in Israel, and added that the GOI studies daily Iranian posturing and boastful announcements in an attempt to discern Iranian intentions. Arad commented that the trends are bad, as Iran continues to accumulate low enriched uranium.

¶25. (S) MFA DG Gal said there was not much difference in the national intelligence estimations (U.S., UK, France, and Russia) regarding Iran. He said the GOI takes "very seriously" Iranian plans for ten new enrichment facilities -- "time is of the essence," and "now is the time to implement crippling sanctions," he added. Gal likened the case for enhanced sanctions to prescribed antibiotics from a doctor -- one must take the full course of antibiotics for the prescribed period of time, or they will not work.

¶26. (S) Turning to his crystal ball, Gilad was not sure Tehran had decided it wants a nuclear weapon -- but is "determined" to obtain the option to build one. He acknowledged that the engagement strategy is a good idea -- "as long as you understand that it will not work." Gilad said it should be clear by February 2010 that engagement as a option has failed -- the imposition of "crippling sanctions" for the February/March/April timeframe is crucial. He said Russian cooperation will be the key, and the current Russian cooperative mind-set cannot necessarily be counted on in several weeks time. By June of next year, Gilad said it should be clear whether sanctions have worked. However, given Tehran's clandestine nuclear program (e.g., Qom), he said it will not be clear when Iran has reached the "point of no return" -- he doubted Iran will choose to let it overtly known that it has produced a nuclear weapon.

FMCT and CTBT

¶27. (S) IAEC DG Chorev raised the FMCT's future in the Conference on Disarmament. U/S Tauscher acknowledged frustration with Pakistan, and noted that while Washington places a high priority on the FMCT, other efforts like a START follow-on and the CTBT will come first. Timbie added that it will take some time to negotiate an FMCT.

¶28. (S) Chorev asked about the current prospects for CTBT ratification in the Senate. U/S Tauscher noted that the START follow-on was a higher priority, and said the Senate will likely focus on the Law of the Sea treaty before turning its attention to the CTBT. She pointed to mid-term



Congressional elections in 2010, and explained that focusing on the CTBT in 2011 might be more prudent given the controversy associated with the treaty. U/S Tauscher explained the necessity of making the case for the CTBT, and hoped to build political momentum in favor of the treaty through the release of the Nuclear Posture Review, a new national intelligence estimate, and the handover on the stockpile stewardship program.

¶29. (S) Chorev asked that the United States consult with the GOI on the CTBT, where he said Israel could be "more flexible than the FMCT." U/S Tauscher asked if the GOI might be willing to make affirmative statements in support of the CTBT; Chorev made no promises, but suspected such a statement might be possible -- especially if it would help with Senate ratification.

¶30. (S) Chorev described the FMCT as "very difficult" for Israel. Scheinman confirmed that negotiations would be based on the 2006 draft FMCT text, with an added verification regime that is being worked on -- he described the verification regime's definitions as "critical" in that regard. Danieli questioned the FMCT's added value, arguing that it would have little impact. He asked who was the FMCT's real target -- India, Pakistan or even Israel?

Jordanian Nuclear Reactor  
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¶31. (S) IAEC DG Chorev raised Jordanian plans to build a nuclear reactor. He said the GOI has decided not to oppose the reactor, and have offered the Jordanians Israeli expertise on where best to build it. Chorev said the IAEC formed a steering committee with its Jordanian counterpart comprised of three working groups focusing on safety, geological surveys, and water issues. Chorev said the steering committee first met in Amman in June 2009, and is waiting to convene again. Danieli stressed that the GOI does not want to hamper the Jordanian nuclear plans, but added that Israel has concerns about border issues and security associated with the reactor. Timbie said the United States is pushing Jordan to sign a 123 Agreement along the same lines as the recent agreement signed with UAE, only stronger. Zefary-Odiz noted that Egypt is putting tremendous pressure on Jordan not to accept a 123 Agreement.

QME

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¶32. (S) U/S Tauscher reiterated the United States' strong commitment to Israel's Qualitative Military Edge (QME), and expressed appreciation for the GOI's willingness to work with us through the newly created QME working groups. Both MOD Pol-Mil Chief Gilad and MFA DDG Bar commended the newly created QME working groups, and asked they be scheduled to convene as soon as possible.

¶33. (U) T has cleared this cable.

CUNNINGHAM